THEOSOPHY

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If coming events are said to cast their shadows before, past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind them. It is, then, by those shadows of the hoary Past and their fantastic silhouettes on the external screen of every religion and philosophy, that we can, by checking them as we go along, and comparing them, trace out finally the body that produced them. There must be truth and fact in that which every people of antiquity accepted and made the foundation of its religions and its faith.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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And here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire so is his will; and as is his will so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap.

—Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 67 MAY, 1979 NUMBER 7

CYCLIC PARALLELS

THROUGHOUT the comparatively brief period of her work in the world—from 1875 to 1891—H.P.B. was under the almost continuous necessity of clarifying the purposes of the Theosophical Movement. Even during her lifetime there was ample confirmation of the warning given to A. P. Sinnett by his Adept Teacher: "The inexorable shadow which follows all human innovations moves on, yet few are they who are ever conscious of its approach and dangers." The English editor of the Indian newspaper *Pioneer* was unable to grasp the gravity of this warning—more than warning, a *prophecy*—and gave the impression to his readers that the Theosophical Society was concerned with the development of "miraculous" powers. His book, *The Occult World,* which appeared in 1881, contained this warning in the first letter he received from the Adept, but as H.P.B. remarked later in *The Key to Theosophy,* he did not "pay attention" to it.

The shadow of misunderstanding of the true work of the Movement would continue, as both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge repeatedly pointed out. Hardly had her books appeared when imitators became common, charging money for instructions in the secrets of the "Occult." Asked about the aims of Theosophy, she replied in the *Key*:

> Its aims are several; but the most important of all are those which are likely to lead to the relief of human suffering under any or every form, moral as well as physical. And we believe

> the former to be far more important than the latter. Theosophy has to inculcate ethics; it has to purify the soul, if it would relieve the physical body, whose ailments, save cases of accidents, are all hereditary. It is not by studying occultism for selfish ends, for the gratification of one's personal ambition, pride, or vanity, that one can ever reach the true goal: that of helping suffering mankind.

To those who wanted to become occultists by independent study, she said:

> Look around you and observe. While two-thirds of *civilized* society ridicule the mere notion that there is anything in Theosophy, Occultism, Spiritualism, or in the Kabala, the other third is composed of the most heterogeneous and opposite elements. Some believe in the mystical, and even in the *supernatural* (!), but each believes in his own way. Others will rush single-handed into the study of the Kabala, Psychism, Mesmerism, Spiritualism, or some form or another of Mysticism. Result: no two men think alike, no two are agreed upon any fundamental occult principles, though many are those who claim for themselves the *ultima thule* of knowledge, and would make outsiders believe that they are full-blown adepts. Not only is there no scientific and accurate knowledge of Occultism accessible in the West—not even of true astrology, the only branch of Occultism which, in its *exoteric* teachings, has definite laws and a definite system—but no one has any idea of what real Occultism means. . . . One and all of those who put their theory into practice are rapidly drifting, through ignorance, into black magic. Happy are those who escape from it, as they have neither test nor criterion which they can distinguish between the true and the false.

She went on to distinguish from genuine occultists the occasional healers and mystics who have made discoveries in the sciences, pointing out that the latter are "specialists" who have had only glimpses of occult truth. Returning to this subject in "Modern Apostles and Pseudo-Messiahs," an article which appeared in *Lucifer* for July, 1890, she pointed out that the work of the Movement was to put an end to the "Messiah" craze:

> Wherever Theosophy spreads, there it is impossible for the deluded to mislead, or the deluded to follow. It opens a new path, a forgotten philosophy which has lived through the ages, a knowledge of the psychic nature of man, which reveals alike the true status of the Catholic saint, and the spiritualist medium the Church condemns. It gathers reformers together, throws light on their way, and teaches them how to work towards a de-

> sirable end with most effect, but forbids any to assume a crown or sceptre, and no less delivers from a futile crown of thorns. . . . It guards and applies every aspiration and capacity to serve humanity in any man, and shows him how. It overthrows the giddy pedestal, and safely cares for the human being on solid ground.

When, in the *Key*, the inquirer asks how one can tell the real teacher from the counterfeit, H.P.B. replied that "a tree is known by its fruit, a system by its results." And in the *Lucifer* article she offered another comment of particular interest:

> To enumerate the various "Messiahs" and their beliefs and works would fill volumes. It is needless. When claims conflict, all, on the face of it, cannot be true. Some have taught less error than others. It is almost the only distinction. And some have had fine powers imperilled and paralyzed by leadings they did not understand.
>
> Of one thing, rationally minded people, apart from Theosophists, may be sure. And that is, service for humanity is its all-sufficient reward; and that empty jars are the most resonant of sound. To know a very little of the philosophy of life, of man's power to redeem wrongs and to teach others, to perceive how to thread the tangled maze of existence on this globe, and to accomplish aught of lasting and *spiritual* benefit, is to annihilate all desire or thought of posing as a heaven-sent saviour of the people. For a very little self-knowledge is a leveller indeed, and more democratic than the most ultra-radical can desire. The best practical reformers of the outside abuses we have known, such as slavery, deprivation of the rights of woman, legal tyrannies, oppressions of the poor, have never dreamed of posing as Messiahs. Honor, worthless as it is, followed them unsought, for a tree is known by its fruits, and to this day "their works do follow them." . . .
>
> With the advent of Theosophy, the Messiah-craze surely has had its day, and sees its doom. For if it teaches, or has taught, one thing more plainly than another, it is that the "first shall be last, and the last first." And in the face of genuine spiritual growth, and true illumination, the Theosophist grows in power to most truly befriend and help his fellows, while he becomes the most humble, the most silent, the most guarded of men.

Well, Theosophy is in the world, but the Messiah-craze is far from over. Increasingly, these days, the journals of opinion give attention to the numerous gurus who dot the landscape, some having rather palatial "ashrams" in which to house their followers, and apparently enjoying circumstances made possible by consider-

able wealth. As H.P.B. says, it is needless to enumerate them and their works, and this is now being done in full measure by others, with the acids of criticism relentlessly applied. In the February *Harper's* Peter Marin reports on his personal experience—not as a believer, but an observer—of "Spiritual Obedience: The Transcendental Game of Follow the Leader." He tells of the longing on the part of many people simply to "submit"—to put themselves in the charge of a teacher who will tell them exactly what to do. His comment is to the point:

> There are many things to which a man or woman might submit: to his own work, to the needs of others, to the love of others, to passion, to experience, to the rhythms of nature—the list is endless and includes almost anything men or women might do, for almost anything, done with depth, takes us beyond ourselves and into relation with other things, and that is always a submission, for it is always a joining, a kind of wedding to the world. There is, no doubt, a need for that, for without it we grow exhausted with ourselves, with our wisdom unspoken, and our needs unmet.
>
> But that general appetite is twisted and used tyrannically when we are asked to submit ourselves unconditionally to other *persons*—whether they wear the masks of state or of the spirit. In both instances our primary relation is no longer to the world or to others; it is to "the master," and the world or others suffer from that choice, because our relation to them is broken, and with it our sense of possibility. In our attempt to restore to ourselves what is missing, we merely intensify the deprivation rather than diminish it.

In this and in similar accounts of the activities of the gurus and their followers, one sees in full dimension the human psychic capacities "running riot, controlling instead of controlled," of which H.P.B. spoke in her Messages to the American Theosophists; and there are signs, also, of "the deliberate surrender of intellect and its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition —a process which cannot fail to lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle." The psychic development of the race is indeed unfolding "in a hot-bed of selfishness and all evil passions," as H.P.B. warned in the *Key*. Which is to say, as she remarked in 1888, that "Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition."

While the parallels between the present Thesophical cycle may not run year by year with what took place in the Theosophical

world a hundred years ago, there are nonetheless correspondences. The surging, upward energies of psycho-moral change were far from being in evidence at the beginning of the nineteenth-century cycle. Mr. Judge, it will be recalled, was unable to inaugurate the period of Theosophic growth in America until 1886, when he founded the *Path*, and one may recall that the occult teachings of the nature of the inner man were at first disdained by the Spiritualists, who were so wedded to their simple belief in an after-life that the self-reliance and self-discipline taught in Theosophy appealed to them hardly at all. Only gradually did the flurry and excitement of the nineteenth-century cycle of psychism subside, and the philosophic and altruistic aspect of the Theosophical Movement begin to take hold of the mind of the times. Not until March, 1890 (in "The Cycle Moveth"), did H.P.B. write movingly of the transformation that was taking place, noting the extraordinary change in Lev Tolstoy, which was representative of "that mysterious cycle of psychic and spiritual evolution now in its full activity," and remarking that the spiritual intuition of mankind was at last awakening "from its long cataleptic sleep." Just as, in the ninteenth century, the psychic attractions of Spiritualism had to do their preliminary work, and then become exhausted, so, in the present, some wearing out of the glamorous promise of gurus and spiritual "techniques" must ensue before the hidden philosophic strength of the cycle can make itself felt. Not until November, 1889, did H.P.B. declare that "the great change is not effected in solemn silence, nor is it perceived only by the few." It was then emerging, she said, in the clash of public opinion: "Many are the honest, aspiring Souls now raising themselves like a dead wall against the torrents of the muddy waters of Materialism."

In the present, students of Theosophy are beginning to make themselves heard. Excellent articles about Theosophy are appearing in European magazines, and among Theosophists generally there is growing recognition of the value and importance of the work of William Q. Judge. At least some evidence is available that Theosophists have taken to heart the counsels given by H.P.B. in "The Tidal Wave," that most definitive account of the change that occurs during the last quarter of every century. There she said:

> If asked, what is it then that will help, we answer boldly:— Theosophical literature; hastening to add that under this term,

neither books concerning adepts and phenomena, nor the Theosophical Society publications are meant. . . .

Whether Theosophists, in the present or the future, will ever work out a practical application of the suggestion is doubtful. To write novels with a moral sense in them deep enough to stir Society, requires a great literary talent and a *born* Theosophist as was Dostoevsky—Zola standing outside of any comparison with him. But such talents are rare in all countries. Yet, even in the absence of such great gifts one may do good in a smaller and humbler way by taking note and exposing in impersonal narratives the crying vices and evils of the day, by word and deed, by publications and practical example. Let the force of that example impress others to follow it; and then instead of deriding our doctrines and aspirations the men of the XXth, if not the XIXth century will see clearer, and judge with knowledge and according to facts instead of prejudging agreeably to rooted misconceptions. Then and not till then will the world find itself forced to acknowledge that it was wrong, and that Theosophy alone can gradually create a mankind as harmonious and simple-souled as Kosmos itself. Having helped to awaken the spirit in many a man—we say this boldly, challenging contradiction—shall we now stop instead of swimming with the TIDAL WAVE?

RESPONSIBILITY—THE AWAKENER

THE ancients told in immemorial scriptures of Awakening to the Self; told it came by holiness and meditation, by asseveration, by harmlessness, and by devotion; and when it came, there was no more beyond the Soul's bright reach. But that was long ago—so long ago!

Now, we *believe* those Souls did then accomplish their awakening, since can not be rightly told what is not of soul's experience; but—now? Now, can there be some method, some devisement by which a man of modern days, of modern modes of living, can awaken from the troubled dreams of this chaotic civilization to clear perception, to profound realization that the Self is indeed Reality?

In ancient days were birth and death as now—were sleep and dreams as now—were joy and sorrow, good and evil as that which smites and blesses now. Human nature has not changed in any land or clime; Divine nature could not change. What ancients did, may moderns do, if logic speaks aright.

That ancient wisdom never left the world strikes with shock of unbelief the very moderns who should make the most of it. Theosophy is means and devisement for *now* awakening to the Self; it is the record of awakened Souls, and provided here in the world today that others may arouse to its sonant tocsin. The awakening to the Self is recorded now as in times of old "for those whose inner darkness has been worn away by strong effort."

Yet, even convinced Theosophists will say, Theosophical ideas are spread abroad on every hand—in books, in story, song, in pulpit, lecture-hall, in drama spoken or silent, in sober aim to arraign for well-reputed magazines the wrongs society, politics, education and religion have wrought. For all that, remains the question, have souls improved? Have these ideas gone deeper than lip or pen? Does minister in pulpit rain these ideas for manna on his listeners that they may be fed, and strenthened carry on the service of their fellows, while he extracts his salary from the great ideas?

NOTE.—This article is reprinted from THEOSOPHY, Volume 17.

Does he denounce his creedal vows, finding them false, and still continue to derive from outer conformity to that creed's institutions his mortal sustenance? Not so can he be true and awaken to the Self! He has not awakened to his responsibility for knowledge availed of from other men.

Humanitarians of other sort are signalized by devotion of all their hours and effort to relieving man's distress of bodily ills and pestilences. They find their means in so despising younger souls that torture of them is unregarded, if older souls may escape their just allotment of disease. How can such find the Self of all creatures? Only can those hope who made the supreme sacrifice, doing to themselves what they would do for others, thus blotting out the infamy of lesser men.

What scientist, what philosopher has left—in spite of learned tomes of deviously wrought logic—a Cause to fight for? What educator but blindly gropes to find a firm foundation for what he sees should be? Ideas he has of Freedom, of awakening sleeping powers of mind and morals: were these *only* needed, life would bloom indeed.

But ideas are seeds which rot in books, which rot in mental soil not enriched by cultivation, which rot in hearts not pulsing from their impact. To serve the Whole they must find the common soil of human relationships, but keep on deriving growth from spiritual spaces. Individual responsibility for them and to the Whole of life makes the connection between "heaven and earth"—the man of Spirit, and the man of flesh and error. With that connection made, here on the earth is one awakened to the Self! All methods of education fail which strike out responsibility at its fundamental factor. All nations fail, all greatness fails, of which responsibility is not the key.

Great Nature claims responsibility for thought and act from the embodied Ego at seven years. Thenceforth, the Ego must assume his own. Responsibility makes him from a babe, a man, and he who has no sense of responsibility is no man. The failure of unembodied Mind-Born Sons to assume it at needed juncture has been the world's great curse: *that* was the most ancient sin, *that* where godhood must be attained again.

He who is responsible in any degree to any thing or Cause or ideal soever is to that extent awakened to the Self. Has one an

appointment—is he responsible for keeping it? Has one so little as a borrowed book—is he responsible for its return? Has one debts—is he responsible for them to utmost farthing? Has one possessions—is he responsible for their stewardship? Has one duties—is he responsible for their performance, unpaid or paid? Has one assignment in lodge work—is he responsible for right study, motive, and full attention to the task? Has one Theosophy—is he responsible to Carry On, were all his comrades to drop or leave its pure banner soiled in dust? Responsibility, more than meditation, subdues the man of passion or desire; responsibility is the Awakener to the Self.

It is Theosophists who first of all men need to wake up from their dream that because the complete philosophy of universal spiritual ideas has been formulated and presented to the world, the task is done! These ideas need to be planted and propagated which touch man's place and part in the universe, his origin, his destiny, his relation to other embodied souls through previous and future births. Man needs to know the philosophy of his divinity and immortality; that he is his own savior, and as he is a unit in any nation, made up only of its units, that nation can march on to glory only through those units awakened to a realization of their divine destiny. They have come to birth and gone to death again and again in many a nation, in ignorance, because they did not waken and assume their full responsibility. Who have the responsibility now in every nation? Theosophists—for passing on Theosophy, for living it; for awakening to it by passing it on; by living it, passing it on.

That this or any nation lives at all is ever because of the few who conserve an ancient valor in themselves, who assume responsibility beyond the personal range to farthest perception of universal duty; who sacrifice where their highest duty lies. Let each Theosophist ask himself if he is of this company. Or, does duty and responsibility mean to him but his family and kin? Does care and watchfulness for youth end with his own children? Does sickness, pain, and death of his own alone bring sorrow to his heart? Does he attend Theosophical meetings that he alone be fed, and that at his own comfort or convenience? Let him meditate on *how* Theosophic ideas and ideals are spread abroad in the world as they are now, though but incompletely. How are they kept vitalized in the upper reaches of the minds of men save the constant iteration of those whose faculties have been fitted to repeat them in knowl-

edge of their worth? Were Theosophical meetings only "meetings," small hope were there; but, wherever the uttered word of Theosophy strikes home and fires aspiration, arouses deeper sense of responsibility, there is force set free to nourish the Cause of Masters, and each one attendant on mere duty of the meeting by so much strengthens that Cause—the Cause of not one lodge, but all lodges; not one nation, but all nations; not one race but all Humanity.

Let the Theosophist also think of the task of Hercules; he has to clean the dogmas and insanities away that have festered on the noble name Theosophy since the original presentment of it by H. P. Blavatsky. It is these which make clear minded men shun it, while they labor on to destroy the creeds and dogmas of churches; while they labor for philosophy in modern science which can not in millenniums approach the ancient science of the Masters of it; while they search ardently for educational remedies and ideals and psychology which stand ready waiting in the ancient Aryan codes and discipline.

Warrior-Theosophists are needed now, with all the ardor and fearlessness of present heady youth, yet with the compassionate wisdom of sages, born from daily and hourly responsibility for that which came to them in hour of need, for mental enrichment, for spiritual strength and vision. And is responsibility founded in gratitude to the Predecessors, that gratitude has magic in it for the awakening. Who will assume the task—to court derision, contumely, disgrace, perchance, that he may serve his fellow men as did all true ones before him—such will surely come to the Awakening to the Self. And to whatever extent one has assumed responsibility for Theosophy, he *is* awakened to the Self.

"THE GITA"—INFORMAL ESSAYS

III

THE Arjuna who meets Krishna on the battlefield suffers from one weakness greater than all others—the Achilles heel of despair. What is despair? A study of philosophy encourages one to seek many definitions by contrast, and thus we might ask ourselves another question at the same time: What is the opposite of despair, since all tendencies or qualities are supposed to alternate with their opposing extremes? Emotional elation is the misguided conviction that we have achieved, or are achieving, more than is actually the case. Despair is the misguided conviction that we have achieved less than our actual accomplishments indicate. The man who struggles through a heavy surf to shore will know of "alternations" which provide an exact physical counterpart for such a psychological cycle. A swell of water will suddenly thrust a swimmer twenty feet closer to his destination. He will feel strong and masterful as accelerated progress is felt by his driving body—but when the water returns from its onward rush towards the shore-line his greatest efforts will not prevent his loss of all that was gained *save that won by his own efforts,* independent of the previously auspicious current.

Our actual position is not in space and time, for we all alternately ride forward on, or are pulled back by, the cyclic recurrence of the waves of emotion. Our position is not, we can come to see, dependent upon these waves at all, but upon the amount of progress we can make in relation to the *whole* ocean, not just to its moving surface. The man who allows himself to be unduly elated relaxes his energy; his body and mind cease to function in the rigorous harmony he had meant to compel. If he despairs at seeing his over-estimated gains eliminated, he similarly relaxes his vigilance. And it is eternal vigilance in the battle of life which makes the Kshatriya quality of such tremendous importance. It is this quality that Arjuna must first attain before he can hope to have enough steadfastness of purpose to regain his lost kingdom.

NOTE.—This is the third of a series of articles on *The Bhagavad-Gita* originally printed in THEOSOPHY, Volumes 38 and 39.

In the second chapter of the *Gita*, we find interesting commentary on a claim of many theosophists—that a universal belief in reincarnation and karma would speedily bring about the moral regeneration of humanity. It appears from what Krishna says, on the contrary, that the least commendable of persons may yet consider "Reincarnation and Karma" as principal articles of their faith:

> The unwise, delighting in the controversies of the Vedas, tainted with worldly lusts . . . pronounce, for the attainment of worldly riches and enjoyments, flowery sentences which promise rewards in future births for present action, ordaining also many special ceremonies the fruit of which is merit leading to power and objects of enjoyment. But those who thus desire riches and enjoyment have no certainty of soul and least hold on meditation.

In other words, it is entirely possible for believers in reincarnation to cherish that belief principally because they wish to extend their involvement in the area of the senses beyond the gap of death. We must learn, though, that no belief can ever quite be a static thing. Any idea about reincarnation will either work upon the manasic nature of its professor in such a way as to ever widen its implications, or else the implications of rebirth will seem fewer and fewer until it remains only as a symbol of unfulfilled wishes. If a man reaches this latter point, he is a logical candidate for forgetting about reincarnation entirely or accepting some belief such as that of the conventional Christian heaven. Any one who concentrates upon a sensual life will slowly materialize his nature to the point where his imagination will have no focus for anything beyond the physical realms. Thus overburdened by the impulses of matter, he cannot possibly see beyond one life. Perhaps many of those described by Krishna as the "unwise," were the forerunners of later sensual materialists who pride themselves on their disbelief in any future life.

This leads us to recognize, does it not, that no "idea" can suddenly transform the nature of man. The noblest ethic can merely suggest a different way of conduct to the man who hears its formulation. His actual behavior patterns may remain unaltered for days, months, years or lifetimes. But, sooner or later, it can be expected that he will either lose the idea entirely or, instead, if he is diligent in meditating upon it, he can satisfactorily change his habitual patterns of behavior.

Of the many worthy philosophers who have defended Plato's

tenet that "ideas rule the world," there are probably few who have not, at times, recognized that this Platonic belief must not be oversimplified. We are constantly presented with anomalies in the form of persons who seriously profess an ethic which seems to have little or nothing to do with their behavior. We are all familiar with religious hypocrisy, which means to us that a great many Christians have professed belief in the superiority of gentleness, kindness, and self-sacrifice over passion, hate, and a desire to subject others to the dominance of their own superiority—yet what has been called the Christian world is, manifestly, the most viciously competitive world, both economically and politically, that is presently known to history.

Another interesting sort of anomaly is presented by the man who preaches the law of the jungle and lives like a saint. Innumerable "materialists" deny anything except biological significance to man, and yet live strictly according to a code completely at variance with the ethics implied by the "survival of the fittest." So we can see that the real man is not any collection of ideas he may be presently entertaining, but rather the habits of character which predispose him to being brutal or kind, loving or hateful, fearful or courageous, under the pressure of difficult circumstances. Still, it does not follow from this that ideas *do not* rule the world, for all of these "character attributes" are, in Theosophical terms, crystallized thoughts. Once upon a time, each habit had its origin in a conception of what would be the most intelligent or logical or satisfactory way to act. Years —or reincarnations later—the suggestive power of the ideas bears fruit, and their character is more plainly seen.

Today, as in Krishna's time, it may be that the most materialistic of men show the greatest concern in an after-life, and the men of spiritual determination—whether they be statesmen and educators like Gandhi, or physicists and educators like Einstein—are obviously concerned very little with what happens to them after death. Of such Krishna says, "those who are united to knowledge and devoted, and who have renounced all reward for their actions, meet no rebirth in this life and go to that eternal blissful abode which is free from all disease and untouched by troubles." It would seem that one's interest in securing a guarantee of a future life on earth is proportionate to his lack of internal security. Most men desperately need thought of reincarnation, the doctrine of intelligent hope. But the wisest men probably do not think about reincarnation at all; rather, they think in terms of the continuity of all life, all

aspirations, and all spiritual achievement.

We are elsewhere informed that it is possible for the man who reaches the state of Adeptship to pass through the after-death conditions of Kama-loka and Devachan in full consciousness—which means, of course, that these states cease to exist in their usual sense for him. Similarly, the Adept, unlike most of us, will never reach a state of despair; he need not pass through those repetitive cycles of psychological death and rebirth which are so familiar to most of us. Our persistent struggle to maintain continuity of motivation and will is undoubtedly the greatest tribute we can pay to the philosophy of reincarnation.

So it should be obvious that we cannot classify human beings morally according to their present professed beliefs. The Theosophist is devoted to the preservation of the current of philosophy. He can judge the qualities of that philosophy in comparison with others, but he cannot judge the moral value of persons according to their theoretical affiliations. This, we might say, is the central root of the necessity for impersonality in all attempts to promulgate Theosophical doctrines. No affiliations between Theosophists are of any extra value because the name Theosophy is accepted as a common denominator. The real common denominator shows itself in habits of action deeply ingrained in men, though the ideas may provide an extension of the capacity for sharing and understanding which makes group creativity possible.

It is the common lot of a humanity in which soul-mind is not yet fully incarnated to undergo innumerable "rebirths in this life," and for those who have set their hearts upon a *particular* result to suffer the interruption to learning and concentration whenever an alteration in events occurs. Man must escape from the endless cycles of psychological death and rebirth in this life before he is *ready* to move into a realm where truth, goodness and beauty cease to be represented by static forms and flow as steady currents in the river of evolution.

Early in the third chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is found a passage of immeasurable psychological importance. "He who remains inert, restraining the senses and organs, yet pondering with his heart upon the objects of sense, is called a false pietist of bewildered soul." These words embody a conception of good and evil which is virtually foreign to most notions of Christian morality.

The recommendations of "asceticism" in orthodox Christian theology, it must be remembered, are all based upon a tremendous and unquestioned first assumption—namely, that *any* suppression of the senses is moral achievement, regardless of motive and circumstance. Behind this specific dogma, of course, lie the twin ideas of original sin and the localization of sin in the impulses of the body. And, from the time when this conception of virtue—equivalent to a despising and flagellating of the physical man—became deeply ingrained in the Western mind, we have seen a constant and unnatural warfare between those who follow the doctrine sufficiently to consistently distrust life and those who, from one reason or another, *loved* life in spite of the influence of the dogmas of "sin."

Fanatical Christian ascetics—and there are probably a still greater number living today than is generally realized except by psychiatrists and theosophists—have established virtue as an equivalent of physical restraint. While it is evident throughout the *Gita* that no true virtue is possible without the capacity for restraint, and without its exercise at the behest of "mental devotion," nothing may be regarded as of superior morality which rests on a foundation of negation. But the fanatics have seen no other course of moral achievement open to them than fighting *against* sin. Even their almost inevitable succumbing to "pondering with heart upon objects of sense" while "restraining the senses and organs" has been due to the conviction that the senses and organs contain a persistent, malevolent power. Further, the man who presumably does "restrain the senses and organs" is not thought to be fit for the task of practicing full restraint without the help of divine grace and the fortifying influences of church and ritual. An educator has succinctly termed this view "anti-life," while Macneile Dixon has said that "such men pay life the supreme compliment of regarding it with horror and loathing."

With this in mind, is it not surpassingly easy to see how the setting was laid for the Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries? Though we usually think of the Renaissance in terms of aesthetic accomplishments, these might be regarded as but the accomplishments of a strong determination to combat every thought and belief which "disowned" a full and happy life. As has been pointed out by numerous scholars, the alternation from one extreme to another was likewise inevitable. The Renaissance was riotous,

ribald, and crudely sensual in many of its forms, because of an unbalanced view which gave the pent-up psychic energies of man an over-valuation after they had for so long been denied natural expression. Small wonder, then, that what we presently call The Scientific Tradition has been accompanied by a prevailing opinion that *all* pleasant *sensations* are the chief desiderata of intelligent living.

On the outskirts of this struggle between men who "loathe the senses" and those who ask nothing more than to live in their realm forever, have been the many who have sought to bring some powers of reasonable analysis to bear on these two extremes. Therefore, much has been written about the implications of the word "sensual," and many distinctions essayed between "sensual" and "sensuous." We find echoes of this struggle in *Websters' International Dictionary,* which assigns moral failing to the "sensualist" and absolves the man who exercises a right to justly appreciate all pleasurable things in the material world, so long as such enjoyment does not involve callousness towards others' needs. These distinctions are theosophically sound, and may even be regarded as indications of the persistent nature of currents of theosophical thought.

It is of especial interest for theosophical students to note the emphatic attention given to this problem by Buddha, as recorded in the *Dhammapada.* Siddhartha, we recall from the legends brought to us through Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia,* felt that the flagellants and extreme ascetics of his time had lost all claim to being moral human beings, so persistently did they despoil and debase a body which should be regarded as a wondrously constructed and useful tabernacle for the soul. In the closing portions of "The Canto of Hell" in the *Dhammapada,* Buddha insists that not only are the thoughtless and heedless sensualists failing to exercise their status as divine beings, but also consigned to hell (or mental obscuration) will be all those who "see something to fear where there is nothing to fear," who "see as perverse that which is not perverse"—and who "see evil where there is no evil."

The energy in every impulse of the psycho-physical man must apparently, be incorporated to serve the purposes of the soul. No "impulses" can be held in absolute suspension. They must either be expressed through action, or they must be transformed by thought in some way that makes action seem finally possible and desirable. No impulse may, on Krishna's or Buddha's terms, be considered

pure evil in itself. First, every thought or impulse, however vagrant, presents us with much from which we may learn, and, secondly, every impulse is compounded of a score of conscious, modifying thoughts from the past, as well as a surge of emotion.

It is the discipline of the mind through philosophy that we may separate into their component parts the "impulses" which move us, and relegate each one to its best sphere of expression. Some elements may be converted into immediate and beneficial action. Others must be taken to the plane of mind, if unsuitable for immediate expression, and there we may discover their relevance to the discharge of present duties "to all life and all beings."

"The false pietist of bewildered soul," inversely, may also include those who indulge in day-dreaming. Every man must be ready for the plane of action each moment of his life—which means ready to put into *use* all thoughts and energies.

The Twofold Death

That which Nature binds, Nature also dissolves: and that which the soul binds, the soul likewise dissolves. Nature, indeed, bound the body to the soul; but the soul binds herself to the body: Nature, therefore, liberates the body from the soul; but the soul liberates herself from the body. Hence there is a twofold death; the one, indeed, universally known, in which the body is liberated from the soul; but the other peculiar to Philosophers, in which the soul is liberated from the body. Nor does the one entirely follow the other.

—Plotinus

letters • questions • comment

In the early days of the Theosophical Movement there was much talk of the development of "occult powers," and many cautions were given by Mr. Judge concerning the follies involved. There does not seem to be the same interest in "powers," today, but there are other longings, such as finding a teacher or "guru," and reaching some height of spiritual attainment. Is this an improvement in the present cycle?

The more truth there is in an idea, the subtler the forms of its perversion. At issue, here, is the meaning of spiritual development, concerning which a certain shyness seems altogether appropriate. The hunger for gurus is indeed a characteristic of the present cycle, and it seems to be an appetite most commonly satisfied in terms of the preconceptions of the seekers. This longing often appears to involve deep contradiction, since the quest for a teacher may be little more than an effort to find someone who will make it unnecessary for us to learn for ourselves. An actual teacher-disciple relationship may lie somewhere in the future for all souls who seek the goal, but in Theosophy the stress is laid on the duty to others and on the necessity of forgetting oneself.

Speaking of the promise of self-development in practice of Yoga, Mr. Judge said in a *Path* article that any Theosophist may take up the Yoga System as found in Patanjali, but on one condition:

> That is that he shall, as a theosophist, try to carry out the fundamental object of the Society—universal Brotherhood. In no other way can he receive assistance from any source. Altruism must be made the aim of life, or all practices are absolutely void of lasting effect. We do not speak from mere theory but from experience; nor do we claim to have perfected altruism in ourselves, but only that, as far as possible, we are trying to make altruism the rule of life.

To an inquirer who asked for something "concrete" to do in the way of development, Mr. Judge said:

> Begin by trying to conquer the habit, almost universal, of pushing yourself forward. This arises from personality. Do not

> monopolize the conversation. Keep in the background. If someone begins to tell you about himself and his doings, do not take first chance to tell him about yourself, but listen to him and talk solely to bring him out. And when he has finished, suppress in yourself the desire to tell about yourself, your opinions and experiences. Do not ask a question unless you intend to listen to the answer and inquire into its value. Try to recollect that you are a very small affair in the world, and that the people around you do not value you at all and grieve not when you are absent. Your only greatness lies in your inner true self and it is not desirous of obtaining the applause of others. If you will follow these directions for one week you will find they will take a considerable effort, and you will begin to discover a part of the meaning of the saying, "Man, know thyself."

What becomes evident from reading both Mr. Judge and H.P.B. concerning the path to spiritual development is that, as Theosophy is better understood, a basic redefinition of the meaning of "spiritual" goes on at the same time. One begins the search from impulses of longing which affect the personal mind. Only those with strong intuitions are able to grasp the impersonal character of the goal at the beginning. The personal mind is continually redefining spiritual ideas in personal terms, which are all it knows, but once one has resolved to tread the path, this process must be reversed—a long and difficult undertaking, and made doubly arduous by the puzzles and frustrations which inevitably attend a succession of discoveries followed by disillusionments. These difficulties are reduced by understanding why they come. At first, as *Light on the Path* indicates, one may feel that he has found *the* Way.

> But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onwards. All steps are necessary to make up the ladder. The vices of men become steps in the ladder, one by one, as they are surmounted. The virtues of men are steps indeed, necessary—not by any means to be dispensed with. Yet, though they create a fair atmosphere and a happy future, they are useless if they stand alone. The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use, and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality.

Here, is seems clear, "individuality" is used to signify the life of the personal man, the instrument rather than the agent of human evolution. How does one withdraw one's sense of identity from the personality? This is the great question. The counsels of H.P.B. to Robert Bowen, a student of her time, are of help in considering what may be involved. She said:

> As one progresses in *Jnana Yoga* one finds conceptions arising which, though one is conscious of them, one cannot express nor yet formulate into any sort of mental picture. As time goes on these conceptions will form into mental pictures. This is a time to be on guard and refuse to be deluded with the idea that the new-found and wonderful picture must represent reality. It does not. As one works on, one finds the once admired picture growing dull and unsatisfying and finally fading out or being thrown away. This is another danger point, because for the moment one is left in a void without any conception to support one, and one may be tempted to revive the cast-off picture for want of a better to cling to. The true student will, however, work on unconcerned, and presently further formless gleams come, which again in time give rise to a larger and more beautiful picture than the last. But the learner will now know that no picture will ever represent the truth. This last splendid picture will grow dull and fade like the others. And so the process goes on, until at last the mind and its pictures are transcended and the learner enters and dwells in the world of no-form, but of which all forms are narrowed reflections. (THEOSOPHY 43:307.)

Thus the true teacher is the one who shows the way to reliance on and learning from ourselves. From studying and working for Theosophy—which means the brotherhood of man—one develops the capacity to recognize such a teacher.

on the lookout

Diminishing Returns

The "disenchantment" H.P.B. speaks of in *Isis* seems now to be reaching a peak. In a book edited by Ivan Illich, *Disabling Professions* (London: Marion Boyars, 1977), John McKnight deals with the general discontent, summarizing briefly:

> Throughout modernized societies a troublesome question is being raised by the citizenry. In popular terms it is:
>
> Why are we putting so much resource into medicine while our health is not improving?
>
> Why are we putting so much resource into education and our children seem to be learning less?
>
> Why are we putting so much resource into criminal justice systems and society seems less and less secure?
>
> Why are we putting so much more resource into mental health systems and we seem to have more mental illness?

Progress Backward?

> As if these questions were not disturbing enough, a new group of service system critics are asking whether we are putting more resources in and getting out the very opposite of what the system is designed to "produce." In medicine, this question is most clearly defined as iatrogenesis—doctor-created disease. The new critics' question is not whether we get less service for more resource. Rather, it is whether we get the reverse of what the service system is supposed to "produce." In the terms of Ivan Illich, the question is whether the systems have become counterproductive. Do we get more sickness from more medicine? Do we get more injustice and crime with more lawyers and police? Do we get more ignorance with more teachers and schools? Do we get more family collapse with more social workers?

Waning Illusions

In another of his books, *The Right to Useful Unemployment* (Boyars, 1978), Ivan Illich speaks of some encouraging signs becoming evident in the present:

> Ten years ago, the myths about the effectiveness of modern medical institutions were still unquestioned. For example, most textbooks accepted the beliefs that adult life expectancy was increasing, that treatment for cancer postponed death, that the availability of doctors produced greater infant survival rates. Since then people have "discovered" what vital statistics have always shown—adult life expectancy has not changed in any socially significant way over the last few generations, is lower in most rich countries today than in our grandparents' time, and lower than in many poor nations. Ten years ago, universal access to post-secondary schooling, to adult education, to preventative medicine, to highways, to a weird global village were still prestigious goals. Today, the great myth-making rituals organized around education, transportation, health care, urbanization have indeed been partly demystified; they have however not yet been disestablished.

Toward Social Regeneration

Illich states his own position:

> I share with others a deep desire to see greater justice. I am absolutely opposed to the unjust distribution of what can be genuinely shared with pleasure. But I have found it necessary, these last few years, to examine carefully the objects of any and every redistribution proposal. Today I see my task even more clearly than when I first started talking and writing about the counterproductive mythmaking that is latent in all late industrial enterprises. My aim has been to detect and denounce the false affluence which is always unjust because it can only frustrate. Through this kind of analysis one can begin to develop the theory which would inspire the social regeneration possible for twentieth-century man.

These are some of the realizations, now quite widespread, growing out of the disenchantment of modern man with the world made by energetic pursuit of material and materialistic objectives, to the exclusion of any thought about a higher human life. This is the Karma growing out of the extraordinary emphasis on and indulgence of the selfishness of the personality, which, H.P.B. says, has so infected the inner being "that the upward attraction has lost all its power on the thinking reasonable man." She condemns

modern civilization as having made of selfishness an ethical characteristic and of vice an art—a description easy enough to confirm by a casual inspection of prevailing economic theory and commercial practice, on the one hand, and the mass forms of popular entertainment on the other. (*S.D.* II, 110.)

"Myth of Concern"

These dark-age tendencies will no doubt run their course, but as Mr. Judge encourages, while we can do nothing against Kali Yuga, a great deal can be accomplished *in it*. Thus we may see what seem results of the Theosophic inspiration and work of the nineteenth century now emerging in various ways—in the new respect for nature and all the earth shown by the ecology movement, in the restoration of self-reliance by the influence of E. F. Schumacher, and in the renewed interest in ancient philosophers, mystics, and teachers in many parts of the world. There is also general improvement in the thinking about religion, which may be illustrated by a passage in *The Stubborn Structure* by Northrop Frye, a distinguished Canadian scholar. Writing about what he calls "the myth of concern," involving the deep religious feelings and loyalties of human beings, he says:

> It is becoming clearer that the impulse which creates the mythology of concern and makes it socially effective is a central part of the religious impulse. Religion in this sense may be without a God; certainly it may be without a first cause or controller of the order of nature, but it can never be without the primitive function of *religio,* of binding together a society with the acts and beliefs of a common concern. Such an impulse starts with one's own society, but if it stops there it sets up a cult of state-worship and becomes perverted. We know in our own experience how our mythology of concern works against exclusiveness: all genuine concern recognizes the claims of Negroes to full citizenship, for example. Yet the kind of problem represented by the disabilities of Negroes is much broader in scope, as many suffer from similar disabilities who are not Negroes, and if we make the symbol of coloured skin an end in itself, like some of the proponents of "black power," we merely set up a new kind of anxiety.

The Only Abiding Loyalty

> The force that creates the myth of concern drives it onward from the specific society one is in to larger and larger groups, and finally toward assimilating the whole of humanity to the

> ideal of its dialectic, its concerned feeling that freedom and happiness are better for everyone without exception than their opposites. All national or class loyalties, however instinctive or necessary, are thus in the long run interim or temporary loyalties: the only abiding loyalty is one to mankind as a whole.

Such expressions contribute to the spread of the First Object of the Theosophical Movement. They were rare or almost non-existent in the years of the nineteenth century before 1875. Another paragraph suggests something of the idea of man which the thoughtful study of literature may produce, and of the rule and duty of the scholar. Prof. Frye says:

> In the society that the mythology of concern ultimately visualizes, a man's real self would consist primarily of what he creates and what he offers. The scholar as man has all the moral dilemmas and confusions of other men, perhaps intensified by the particular kind of awareness that his calling gives him. But *qua* scholar what he is is what he offers to his society, which is his scholarship. If he understands both the worth of the gift and the worth of what it is given for, he needs, so far as he is a scholar, no other moral guide.

Moral Questioning

The "Age of Inquiry" heralded by Mr. Judge has many aspects. There is for example the recent progress of biological science in the area of genetic manipulation—effectively summarized in a booklet, *The Future of Medicine*, issued by Boehringer Ingelheim —probably marking a step in the direction spoken of by H.P.B.: "Chemistry and physiology are the two great magicians of the future." Yet one may wonder if the methods employed by present-day science are not a sorcerer's approach. At the same time, urgent moral questions are raised by the medical practice of abortion, while the revolt of many against the medical prolongation of the process of dying, through the elaborate application of technological and biochemical means, is accompanied by expressions of moral outrage. The right to die with dignity is proclaimed, and the whole question of the responsibility of the individual is renewed in a practical setting.

Ethical Inquiry

These are questions for which science, admittedly, has no answer. Accordingly, the current of inquiry moves into the area of ethical concern, bearing out Mr. Judge's prediction that "the in-

quiries will grow louder year by year and the answers be required to satisfy the mind as it grows more and more, until at last, all dogmatism being ended, the race will be ready to face all problems, each man for himself, all working for the good of the whole." An example of serious inquiry in the present is the publication, *Knowledge, Value, and Belief* (Vol. II) issued by Hastings Center (in New York), made up of essays by a number of contributors concerning the bearing of ethics on scientific matters. "These studies," the editors say, have ranged from the very concrete—definition of death, the ethics of psychosurgery, mass genetic screening, for example—to the more general, such as justice and the distribution of medical care." This volume gives evidence of the revival of moral thought throughout the academic world, showing increasing concern for individual moral responsibility. This attitude is no doubt in part a result of the cycle referred to by Mr. Judge, pressed onward by the dilemmas in both science and world affairs. Although the discussions in the Hastings Center volume are couched in learned language, freedom from dogmatism, whether religious or scientific, seems a pervasive quality, while the theme of responsibility is basic in all the contributions.

Man's Moral Nature

In "The Concept of Responsibility," Hans Jonas says:

> A first obvious finding then is: that the actions that ethics has to deal with now have an unprecedented causal reach into the future. This, together with the sheer magnitude of the effects, moves "responsibility" into the center of ethics, where it has never stood before.

Considering the realities of human nature, Dr. Jonas says:

> One may well say that there would be no "thou shalt" if there were no one to hear it and on its own attuned to its message, even straining toward its voice. This is the same as saying that men already *are* potentially "moral beings" by possessing that affectability, and only thereby can also be immoral. But it is equally true that the moral sentiment itself demands its authorization from beyond itself, and this not merely in defense against challengers from without (including those from rival motives in oneself), but from an inner need of that very sentiment to be in its own eyes more than a mere impulse. Not the validity, to be sure, only the efficacy of the moral command depends on the subjective condition, which is its premise and its object at the same time, solicited, appealed to, claimed with success or in vain.

Modern Obscurity of Responsibility

It was in response to the need made plain by such reflections that Mr. Judge, writing in the *Ocean*, stressed the importance of Karma and Reincarnation:

> The scientific and self-compelling basis for right ethics is found in these and in no other doctrines. For if right ethics are to be practiced merely for themselves, men will not see why, and have never been able to see why, for that reason, they should do right.

Dr. Jonas takes oblique note of this fact by pointing out that responsibility has not had a "conspicuous role" in past moral systems:

> What is the explanation? Responsibility, so we learned, is a function of power and knowledge, with their mutual relation not a simple one. Both were formerly so limited that, of the future, most had to be left to fate and the constancy of the natural order, and all attention focused on doing right what had to be done now. But right action is best assured by right being: therefore, ethics concerned itself mainly with "virtue," which just represents the best possible being of man and little looks beyond its performance to the thereafter. . . .

The Weakness of Uncertainty

> The generally held rule is: what is good for man as a personal and public being now will be so in the future; therefore, the best pre-shaping of the future lies in the goodness of the present state which, by its internal properties, promises to continue itself. For the rest, one was conscious of the uncertainty of human affairs, of the role of chance and luck, which one could not anticipate, but against which one could arm with a good constitution of the souls and a sound constitution of the political body.

This is a way of saying that in the past there has been little or no sense of a moral order in the cosmos—in short, the moral impulse, while existing in humans, has remained weak since it has "no authorization from beyond itself." This is precisely what is supplied by the doctrine of Karma. The study of the operations of Karma, as presented in the *Ocean* and elsewhere in Theosophical writings, eventually leads to the profound conviction that this is the way the entire universe works. We have our conscience and our moral intuitions, but these need the intellectual reinforcement that the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation provide. They are "science" in the best sense of the word.

"Statistical Polytheism"—a Scientific Religion?

A little less than a half century ago, progressive theologians were citing the uncertainty principle of Werner Heisenberg—involving the unpredictability of certain atomic phenomena—as evidence that human beings have free will. It was as though the theologians believed that they needed permission from the physical sciences to affirm the dignity of man. In this way the dominion of materialism over all serious thought was revealed. The situation is not much changed today, at least in the quarters of academic orthodoxy. A physicist, Lawrence Lerner, lecturing recently at California State University at Long Beach, told his audience: "There are enormous possibilities in modern physics, but theologians are not taking advantage of them." He said this in developing his view that the ideas of Judeo-Christian religion have become "basically irrelevant," and he proposed that religious thinkers should take their lead from the advances of science. According to a report in the *Daily Forty-Niner* (Sept. 12, 1978), the campus paper:

> Lerner said that the discoveries made in quantum mechanics physics over the past 50 years have caused great ramifications in the traditional Christian view of God, particularly Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. The principle states that it is impossible to predict the exact position of sub-atomic particles with a great degree of accuracy.
>
> Lerner maintains that since this principle makes it easier to predict large-scale events than those occurring at the atomic level, this makes the idea of one omnipotent entity controlling all the universe unlikely.
>
> As an alternative, Lerner proposed a new religion he calls "Statistical Polytheism." This involves the assignment of the responsibilities of the universe to a nearly infinite number of gods, all of whom have one minute task to do as individuals, but whose combined efforts result in the statistical regularity scientists call "natural law."

Millions of "Gods"

Such reports may generate a twofold response from Theosophical students. It is dismaying to find that the antics of atomic particles should be regarded as having greater philosophical authority than the thoughts of human beings; but, on the other hand,

for this physicist, such ideas have led to what seems a penetrating intuition. His "Statistical Polytheism" recalls H.P.B.'s statement (in her article "Elementals") that in the Indian pantheon "there are no less than 330,000,000 of various kinds of spirits, including elementals," and her comment (in "Thoughts on the Elementals") that the masses of mankind are "well justified in believing in a plurality of Gods." The metaphysical order which governs this vast collectivity of intelligences is described by H.P.B. with the rigor of scientific generalization:

> Pythagoras taught that the entire universe is one vast series of mathematically correct calculations. Plato shows the Deity geometrizing. The world is sustained by the same law of equilibrium and harmony upon which it was built.

Philosophy Without "Blanks"

A reading of these two articles by H.P.B. (in the pamphlet, "Gods and Elementals") would show the substantial reality behind Prof. Lerner's "Statistical Polytheism," explaining, also, the variety in universal tradition concerning the countless intelligences manifesting in nature. As H.P.B. says:

> The Universal Æther was not, in the eyes of the ancients, simply a tenantless something, stretching throughout the expanse of heaven; it was for them a boundless ocean, peopled like our familiar earthly seas, with Gods, Planetary Spirits, monstrous and minor creatures, and having in its every molecule the germs of life from the potential up to the most developed. . . . In the Ancient philosophy there was no missing link to be supplied by what Tyndall calls an "educated imagination"; no hiatus to be filled with volumes of materialistic speculations made necessary by the absurd attempt to solve an equation with but one set of quantities; our "ignorant" ancestors traced the law of evolution throughout the whole universe.

Some day, perhaps, the world of modern thought will see the necessity of filling out the intuitive speculations of scientists with the living tissue of occult teaching. Meanwhile, Prof. Lerner is certainly correct in speaking of the basic irrelevance of Judeo-Christian ideas. "The twentieth century," H.P.B. remarked in "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels," "has strange developments in store for humanity, and may even be the last of its name."

A National Need

The idea of responsibility is returning to the foreground of

modern concern in a variety of ways. One obvious way is the new awareness of human responsibility for the care of the earth, as a result of the visible effects of pollution and other disturbances of natural balance. The strongest expression of this sort of responsibility is probably Wendell Berry's recently published book, *The Unsettling of America* (Sierra Club). Thoughtful scholars are making similar contributions. In the *American Review* for May, 1973 (No. 17), John Schaar, who teaches political science at the University of California in Santa Cruz, writes of the need to restore the right sort of patriotism in American life. He gives his reasons:

> The first reason stems from my affection and respect for my fellow-citizens, and from my wish to see them even more respectable than they are. We have lost patriotism. Although many count the loss small, and many others do not know it has occurred, I believe that the loss is great. The second reason stems from my wish to see a revitalized radical politics in this country, and from my conviction that Susan Sontag is correct when she says that "probably no serious radical movement has any future in America unless it can revalidate the tarnished idea of patriotism." The radicals of the 1960s did not persuade their fellow-Americans, high or low, that they genuinely cared for and shared a country with them. And no one who has contempt for others can hope to teach those others. A revived radicalism must be a patriotic radicalism. It must share and care for the common things, even while it has a "lover's quarrel" with fellow-citizens.

What Is Patriotism?

> To be a patriot is to have a patrimony; or, perhaps more accurately, the patriot is one who is grateful for a legacy and recognizes that the legacy makes him a debtor. There is a whole way of being in the world, captured best by the word reverence, which defines life by its debts: one is what one owes, what one acknowledges as a rightful debt or obligation. The patriot moves within that mentality.

Prof. Schaar doesn't think much of the "internationalism" of the present, which seems to him to have been confused with technology and its possibilities:

> No doubt, technology has unified the world in a thousand ways, producing a call on the part of many human people for world law and the brotherhood of man. But it would be more straightforward for the internationalist to speak less about the brotherhood of man and more about the standardization of the technological order, for it is a brute fact that technology has destroyed and is destroying hundreds of forms of human life. It

> is a cruel confusion to call that brotherhood unless one holds that brotherhood can appear only after those who were different are dead.

Brotherhood is an attitude of mind, and patriotism of the sort this scholar describes seems closely akin. One thinks of H.P.B.'s remarks about duty in the *Key* when reflecting on Schaar's idea that "one is what one owes," and of her article, "Civilization the Death of Art and Beauty" in connection with his comment on the effects of technology. Little by little, the world of thoughtful persons in this century seems to be growing up to Theosophy, although the habits and ways of the Kali Yuga are still evident on every hand.

A Poet Philosophizes

John Keats was a down-to-earth poet unable to share in the optimism of Percy Shelley, who believed that the advance of civilization would eliminate human suffering. A passage in a book on Keats, provided by a reader, gives his point of view and then continues, drawing on his letters, to show Keats's idea of possible human development. Here is illustrated the remarkable intuitions which some poets enjoy, to which H.P.B. occasionally referred. The book is *John Keats: The Making of a Poet* (Viking, 1963), and the author, Aileen Ward, quotes her subject's inability to believe that "progress" will put an end to human pain:

> "The nature of the world will not admit of it," Keats mused; first "let the fish philosophize the ice away from the Rivers in winter time." The inhabitants of the world will correspond to itself, he saw; and yet his awareness of the limitations on human possibility imposed by man's inescapable link to nature did not preclude a belief in something by which man rises above mere "animal eagerness" and approaches disinterestedness. Even while glimpsing the beauty of destructive animal vitality, Keats recognized "an electric fire in human nature tending to purify." So the inevitability of human suffering was no argument against a qualified faith in spiritual progress—such benefit to mankind as might result from "the persevering endeavors of a seldom appearing Socrates." Still less was it a proof of the Christian belief that this world is a vale of tears which will be redeemed by the joys of heaven. No, there was another reason for suffering, a positive value to be realized in this very world.

Achievement of Identity

Toward the end of his brief life Keats said in a letter to his brother in America:

> "Call the world if you Please 'The Vale of Soul-making'," he wrote to George. "Then you will find out the use of the world. I say *'Soul making'* Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence—There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions —but they are not Souls until they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself." It is significant that, after once viewing the lack of identity as the special exemption of the poet, Keats now saw the achievement of identity as the highest goal of human development. . . . Wisdom, like good, must be attained in this life if it is to be attained at all; and it is won by slow perfection not in knowledge but in experience. "As various as the Lives of Men are—so various become their souls," he concluded; and in the end the achievement of identity is good, however much suffering it entails, because—he can appeal only to experience—it brings "a bliss peculiar to each ones individual existence," the acceptance of one's self and one's destiny as the very condition of being. Whatever experience had brought him, one thing seems clear: from his struggle with the world of circumstance, heart and mind together, he had emerged at last, altered and fortified, with the firm sense of his own identity which had eluded him so long.

"An Inspiration of his Own"

Scholars seem inevitably drawn to these wonderful passages in Keat's correspondence, showing how his spiritual convictions were formed, and demonstrating the maturity of Keats as a thinker as well as a poet. He was an artist whose remarkable powers of imagination led him in a true direction, at the same time giving to others encouragement to pursue their own independent reflections concerning the meaning and purpose of life. A reading of Keats's letters might well recall to mind what is said by H.P.B. in "What Are the Theosophists?":

> Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with "an inspiration of his own" to solve the universal problems.

Theosophy in France

An article on Theosophy, faithful in spirit and content to the work of H. P. Blavatsky, was published last year in the French magazine, *Psi International,* in the July-August-September number. The writer is Dr. Jean-Louis Siemons, a professor of physics, who presents a brief history of the Movement and gives the fundamental ideas of the teachings. The article is appropriately illustrated by

portraits of H.P.B., Mr. Judge, and H. S. Olcott. The writer describes the books used by students and recommends study of the *Key* and Mr. Judge's *Ocean* for beginning students, noting also the availability of Theosophical magazine articles by these two. In the portion devoted to the course of the Movement after the death of H.P.B., the splits and development of "personality cults" are referred to, it being noted that early in this century the time came for a return to the source of Theosophy in the original teachings of those who first made the doctrines known to the world. Readers attentive to what this writer says will be able to find their way to the Message given to the world by H.P.B. a century ago. The article is titled "The Paths of Theosophy."

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